

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Miss. Baptists return from NYC ministry

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force members Jim Didlake, director of the Men's Ministry department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, and Kay Cassibry, director of Mississippi Baptists' Woman's Missionary Union, spent several days in New York City ministering to the needs of policemen, firefighters, and other workers faced with the aftermath of the terrorist attack Sept. 11.

Didlake and Cassibry arrived in New York City Sept. 18, along with four other Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force members.

The other members of the team included Jerry Sanford, pastor of First Church, Sardis; William Wright, pastor of McDowell Road Church, Jackson; Paul Cassibry of Clinton, a retired military chaplain; and John Vess, a member of Crossgates Church, Brandon.

Didlake and Sanford had already served a stint at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., helping to coordinate the disaster response there.

The six Mississippians worked as chaplains and counselors in New York City. Their work began at Raritan Valley Church in New Jersey, which served as the staging area for the Baptist relief efforts.

From there, their base of operations was moved to the Baptist Association of Metropolitan New York in Manhattan.

"We realized that we were going to have to exercise real sensitivity in dealing with people on the streets," said Cassibry. "People approached us most of the time."

"They would see our (disaster relief uniform) yellow jackets, see that we were from Mississippi, and would just open up. People would ask, 'Why would you come from so far away?' They were just awed."

"We had two of our group assigned to the Compassion Center," Didlake said. "This is where the families who had missing loved ones came for help."

"There were a lot of counselors there, just giving out information and trying to help."

The Red Cross always has mental health workers on site at this kind of tragedy, said Didlake, "but they realized they needed chaplains. They trained the chaplains there on site."

"Three of us from Mississippi spent our time on the streets, just listening to people and checking on the policemen and firemen."

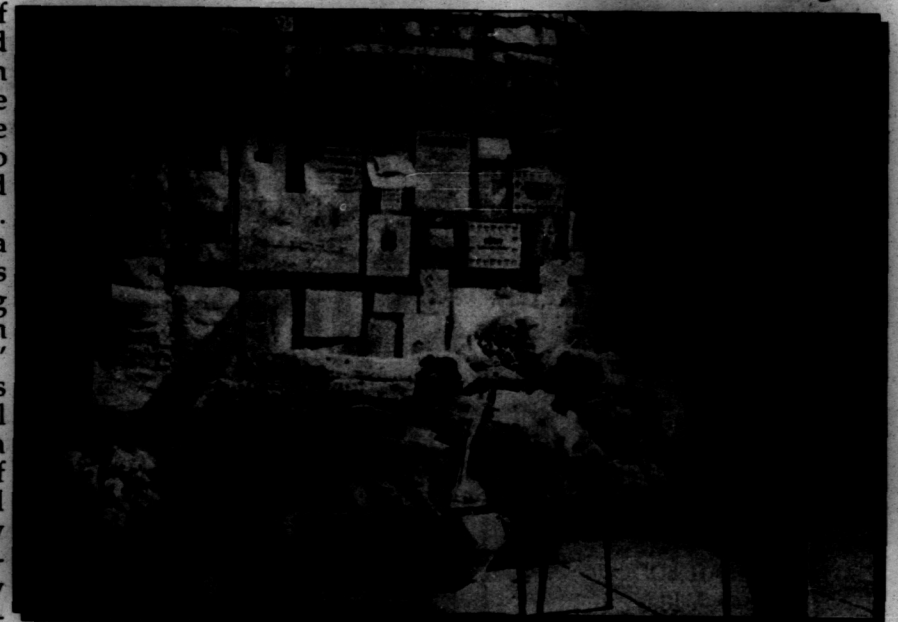
"They had policemen scattered around on standing beats all around the disaster area. They might be responsible for one area for seven days, and they were exhausted."

"They might be rotated or shifted out to another area just to give them a break. We'd try to minister to them," Didlake said.

"The firemen were just wonderful," Cassibry said. "They would be in the fire stations, and they'd come out and speak to people that would come by."

"In a lot of the fire stations, trucks from other areas would come by just to check on them. There were enormous opportunities to talk to them, and I think that was one of our biggest ministries. On the subways, people weren't talking to each other, but they would see our badges and would always talk to us. People wanted to tell their stories."

"They wanted to tell you where they were when it happened. They wanted to tell you who they knew, what they thought about it, how they felt about it — if they could find the words to describe it."



TIME TO PONDER — Kay Cassibry, executive director of the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union, scans a makeshift memorial near the site of the terrorist destruction on New York City's Manhattan Island. Cassibry, a member of the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force, served as a counselor in the post-disaster Mississippi Baptist response. (BR photo by Jim Didlake)

"The day I lost it was at one of the fire stations," Cassibry said. "The candles and the pictures were everywhere. People had brought a lot of food."

"These two little kids with their mother — they couldn't have been more than four or five years old — brought a big plate of cookies to the fire station. They knocked on the door, and this big, burly fireman came to the door."

"He looked down, because at first he didn't see them, but they were tugging on his coat. He scooped them up and they handed him this plate of cookies and said, 'We're so sorry your friends died. He lost it, too. These guys had lost eleven out of their station.'"

Didlake stated that the Red Cross had nothing but praise for Southern Baptists.

"One high official with the Red Cross stopped me and said, 'Isn't this a great partnership?' I can't think of any partnership stronger than that between the Red Cross and Southern Baptists," Didlake recounted.

The Mississippi Baptist disaster relief response to the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C., is being made possible by gifts to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering.

In addition to sponsoring the six Mississippi Baptists, the Lackey offering contributed \$2,500 to the relief efforts of the Baptist Convention of New York.

Mississippi Baptists have also set up a special fund for the relief efforts in New York City and Washington, D.C. Gifts to the fund are tax deductible, and 100% of the gifts goes to the relief efforts.

To contribute to the fund, make checks payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) with the notation, "New York City." Mail to the MBCB Business Office, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.



MINISTERING IN NYC — Jerry Sanford (left), pastor of First Church, Sardis, talks with a New Yorker near the site of the collapsed World Trade Center towers. A total of six members of the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force served as chaplains and counselors at the site of the terrorist attack. (BR photo by Jim Didlake)

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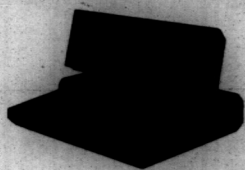
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**William H.
Perkins Jr.**
Editor

EDITOR

William H. Perkins Jr.

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Tony Martin

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Postmaster: Send changes of address to The BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Send news, communication, and address changes to The Editor, BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530 (601) 968-3800. Fax: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

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The people on the bus

Only once in a great many years does an event so tragic — so utterly devastating — occur that the normally disinterested turn to spirituality on the scale we are experiencing since the terror attacks over three weeks ago in New York City and Washington, D.C.

People are trying to get their mind around the horror and the senselessness of the crime, but they can't. It's just too big, too much of a waste of humanity. They aren't hearing what they need to hear to again feel secure. It is, simply and finally, incomprehensible.

Mississippi Baptist counselors, members of the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force just back from Ground Zero in New York City, report that one of the most prevalent questions they were asked by New Yorkers was, "Why?"

For such a simple question, there are few easy answers. The who, what, when, and where they can grasp in fine detail, but the why is more difficult for them.

In their desperate search for the one answer that maddeningly eludes them, they have decided to give God a try. Sunday worship services in churches from coast to coast have been filled for the past three weeks. In many churches, it looks like Easter service every Sunday.

With one set of attacks behind us and warnings from the highest levels of government that many more attacks are likely in the future, people are anxious, jittery, and off-balance. They are, in a word, scared.

They finally understand the tenuousness of life and the consequences of being unprepared for death. They've seen both unfold before their eyes in grim detail, and they're wondering if it does happen to them next time, what of their eternal fate?

For a lot of reasons, such events drive people to God and — make no mistake — God will use this opportunity to bring as

many people to him as are willing.

That's where we come in. Christians all over the country and the world should be telling these world-weary, frightened people about the security found only in Jesus, the Son of God and our one true and living Lord and Savior.

The fields are truly white unto harvest, not only in New York City and Washington, D.C., but across the world after this greatest of tragedies. It's a shame that it takes such tragedy to convince some people to get right with God, but the opportunity is here.

Fred Barnes, publisher of the Weekly Standard magazine in Washington, D.C., and a professing Christian, spoke last week to the Baptist Press Student Journalism Conference in Nashville. He recounted the story of a woman he interviewed shortly after the attack on the World Trade Center towers.

The woman and one of her friends worked together in one of the towers. For years, the woman had been sharing the Gospel with her friend, and for years the friend had declined to accept Christ.

"All right, but you'd better 'get on the bus,' dear, before it's too late," she would always tell her friend.

On September 11, the women found themselves racing down the stairs after the first jetliner collided with their tower. They



OPPORTUNITY — A woman is overcome with emotion while observing a memorial to the World Trade Center victims in Union Square in Manhattan. Christians have an unprecedented opportunity to console the grieving and present the Gospel message. (BP photo by Gibbs Frazier)

made their way out onto the street just in time to be showered with flaming debris from the second collision.

When the towers began to collapse, they scrambled aboard an abandoned city bus and held each other as roof-bending chunks of concrete and steel crashed into the bus.

When the debris shower ceased and sunlight once again appeared, the woman's friend looked at her with a nervous smile and said with a still-shaky voice, "Okay, I'm on the bus. Tell me again about Jesus."

There are a lot more people on that bus right now, and they want to know about Jesus. It is our responsibility to tell them, and we may never have a greater opportunity in our lifetimes.

Are we up to the challenge? Let us pray about it, and then get to work in the harvest.

GUEST OPINION:

It's OK to wave the flag

By Kelly Boggs, pastor
Valley Church, McMinnville, Or.



PROUD TO BE AMERICAN — Lisa Shaver of Brooklyn, N.Y. shares her support to volunteers traveling from the disaster site out of the city. Several hundred people cheered the volunteers who continue to work around the clock in an effort to clear the wreckage of the World Trade Center. (Photo by Gibbs Frazier)

offense who were quick to object to the patriotic displays.

School children in at least one school in Oregon and another in Texas were told that T-shirts bearing the likeness of the flag were inappropriate. It was said to violate dress codes banning the display of any logo.

School bus drivers in Oregon were not allowed to display flags on their buses. The ban was justified for safety reasons, officials said, but drivers asserted the 12-by-16-inch flags posed no danger.

The flag of the United States is not some crass corporate logo. Nor is it a banner of intolerance. It is the very symbol of liberty.

Terror has squeezed our country hard but has given us a glimmer of hope. At the same time, it has exposed those in our midst who have a disdain for what the United States stands for as symbolized in the flag.

The freedom we enjoy almost certainly insures that someone will always be offended. So, to those who are bothered by the display of the American flag, be offended.

Voice your displeasure, but do not hinder others from celebrating America's heritage of liberty.

Boggs' column appears each Friday in Baptist Press.

PBS series on evolution garners challenge

SEATTLE (BP) — The start of a seven-part series on evolution by the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) was greeted Sept. 24 by 100 scientists challenging Darwinian evolution.

The scientists, in a succinct statement coordinated by the Seattle-based Discovery Institute public policy center, said they are "skeptical of claims for the ability of random mutation and natural selection to account for the complexity of life."

The Discovery Institute, in a news release, said it compiled the list of signers "to answer the contention of designated spokespeople" for the PBS series that "virtually all reputable scientists in the world" support Darwin's theory of evolution.

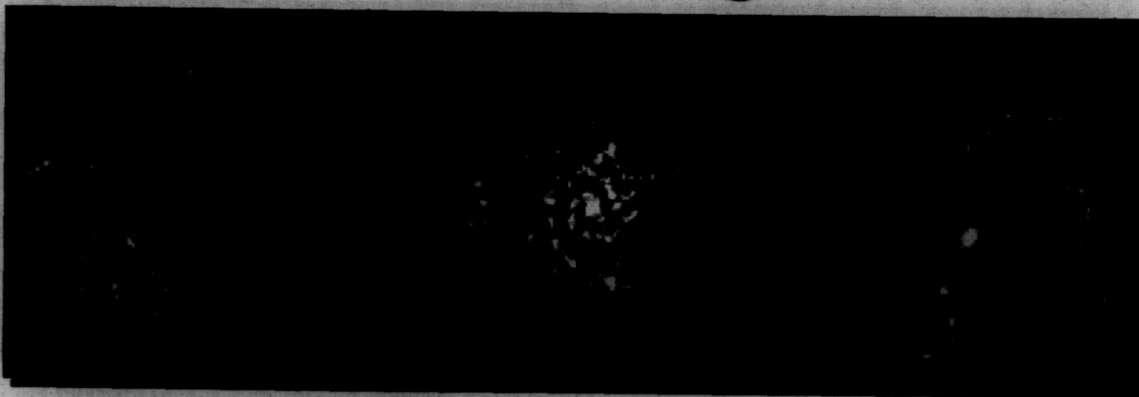
Discovery Institute officials charge that officials of WGBH/Clear Blue Sky Productions have used that contention to keep any scientific criticism of Darwinism from being acknowledged or examined in the series.

"They want people to think that the only criticism of Darwin's theory today is from religious fundamentalists," the Discovery Institute's president, Bruce Chapman, said.

"They routinely try to stigmatize scientists who question Darwin as 'creationists,'" he said.

The Discovery Institute has produced a 150-page guide to the PBS series, titled "Getting the Facts Straight" and available via the Internet at the organization's www.discovery.org website.

The Discovery Institute on its website, states, "Accuracy and objectivity are what we should expect in a television documentary — especially in a science documentary on a publicly funded network. But the PBS 'Evolution' series falls far short of meeting these basic standards."



UNIQUE SYSTEM — The Milky Way galaxy is unusual in that it is one of the most massive galaxies in the nearby universe. The Solar System, of which Earth is a part within the galaxy, also seems to have qualities that make it rather unique. According to Guillermo Gonzalez, assistant professor of astronomy at the University of Washington, the qualities make the sun one of the few stars in the Galaxy capable of supporting complex life. (Photo courtesy of the Discovery Institute News)

"It distorts the scientific evidence, ignores scientific disagreements over Darwin's theory, and misrepresents the theory's critics. The series also displays a sharply biased view of religion and seeks to influence the political debate over how evolution should be taught in schools."

"Evolution" presents itself as science journalism, but it is actually a work of one-sided advocacy."

The Discovery Institute also noted: "The [PBS] series is intended not only for broadcast on public television, but also for use in public schools. 'Evolution's' biased content, however, makes it inappropriate for classroom use without supplementary materials."

The organization stated that its "Getting the Facts Straight" viewer's guide "has been prepared to help teachers, parents, students, and interested citizens ensure that discussions of evolution in the classroom fairly represent the evidence and the full range of scientific viewpoints about Darwin's controversial theory."

The viewer's guide also charges that the series seeks "to promote a controversial political agenda."

The "Getting the Facts Straight" guide cites an internal document prepared by the Evolution Project/WGBH

Boston stating that one of the goals of the series is to "co-opt existing local dialogue about teaching evolution in schools," including carrying its pro-evolution stance to school boards and other government officials.

The Discovery Institute, meanwhile, released a poll by Zogby International reporting that 71% of Americans believe biology teachers should teach Darwin's theory of evolution along with evidence against the theory. The survey of 1,202 adults was conducted from Aug. 25-29.

Stephen Meyer, a Cambridge-educated philosopher of science who directs the Discovery Institute's Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture, said, "The number of scientists who question Darwinism is a minority, but it is growing fast. This is happening in the face of fierce attempts to intimidate and suppress legitimate dissent."

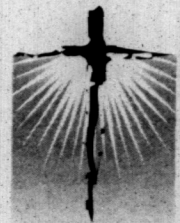
"Young scientists are threatened with deprivation of tenure. Others have seen a consistent pattern of answering scientific arguments with ad hominem attacks. In particular, the series' attempt to stigmatize all critics — including scientists — as religious 'creationists' is an excellent example of viewpoint discrimination."

Signers of the Discovery Institute statement questioning Darwinism represent such fields as biology, physics, chemistry, mathematics, geology, and

anthropology from throughout the United States and from several other countries.

Professors and researchers at such universities as Princeton, MIT, University of Pennsylvania and Yale, as well as smaller colleges and the National Laboratories at Livermore, Calif., and Los Alamos, N.M., are among the signers. A number of them have authored or contributed to books on issues related to evolution, or have books underway.

The two-sentence Discovery Institute statement, titled, "A Scientific Dissent from



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Darwinism," reads: "I am skeptical of claims for the ability of random mutation and natural selection to account for the complexity of life. Careful examination of the evidence for Darwinian theory should be encouraged."

Chemist and five-time Nobel nominee Henry "Fritz" Schaefer of the University of Georgia is quoted in the Discovery Institute news release as saying, "Some defenders of Darwinism embrace standards of evidence for evolution that as scientists they would never accept in other circumstances."

Jed Macosko, a young research molecular biologist at the University of California, Berkeley, said, "It is time for defenders of Darwin to engage in serious dialogue and debate with their scientific critics."

"Science can't grow where institutional gatekeepers try to prevent new challengers from being heard."

TLW going into orbit

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Students around the country are being invited to gather in person or by satellite at Wedgwood Church, Fort Worth, on Feb. 13, to celebrate their commitment to remain sexually pure until marriage. In its latest national celebration, True Love Waits (TLW), the sexual abstinence movement begun by Southern Baptists and sponsored by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, is inviting teenagers and college students to join in satellite rallies across North America. The one-hour nationally televised event will be hosted by the brother-sister duo of Phillip and Natalie LaRue, Christian artists who have consistently taken a stand for sexual purity. The event also will feature the new Christian band, Phat Chance. The broadcast will feature an interactive online commitment form, along with scrolling e-mails at the bottom of the screen. Those taking part in the event will be able to send and read student online commitments and testimonies of faith and purity. Churches wanting to tune in to the broadcast will need satellite equipment. For continued updates on transmission/reception instructions, visit the True Love Waits website at www.truelovewaits.com. To help spread the message of the broadcast, e-mail truelovewaits@lifeway.com or call (800) LUV-WAIT.

Looking back

10 years ago

The "takeover" of the Southern Baptist Convention by "fundamental-conservatives" may be God's judgement on a proud people convinced they were "God's last and only hope," in the opinion of Stan Hastey, executive director of the breakaway Southern Baptist Alliance.

20 years ago

Detailed planning for a new, \$6.5 million office building in downtown Nashville to house the programs of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee is authorized during the committee's regularly-scheduled September meeting.

50 years ago

A recent letter to the editor reads: "You ought to be paralyzed from your feet up. In that way you would not be able to write some of the things that you write in *The Baptist Record*. You make me sick. The article 'Why Pray to Mary?' is what I'm talking about. Mary is the mother of God."

SBC head meets with Bush before address

WASHINGTON (BP) — James Merritt, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of the Atlanta-area First Church, Snellville, was one of six ministers invited to join President Bush for a closed-door meeting just hours before the president addressed a joint session of Congress on Sept. 20.

"I think I can speak for the entire group when I say that without question, we all came away impressed with where he is right now as a leader and where he is spiritually," Merritt told Baptist Press.

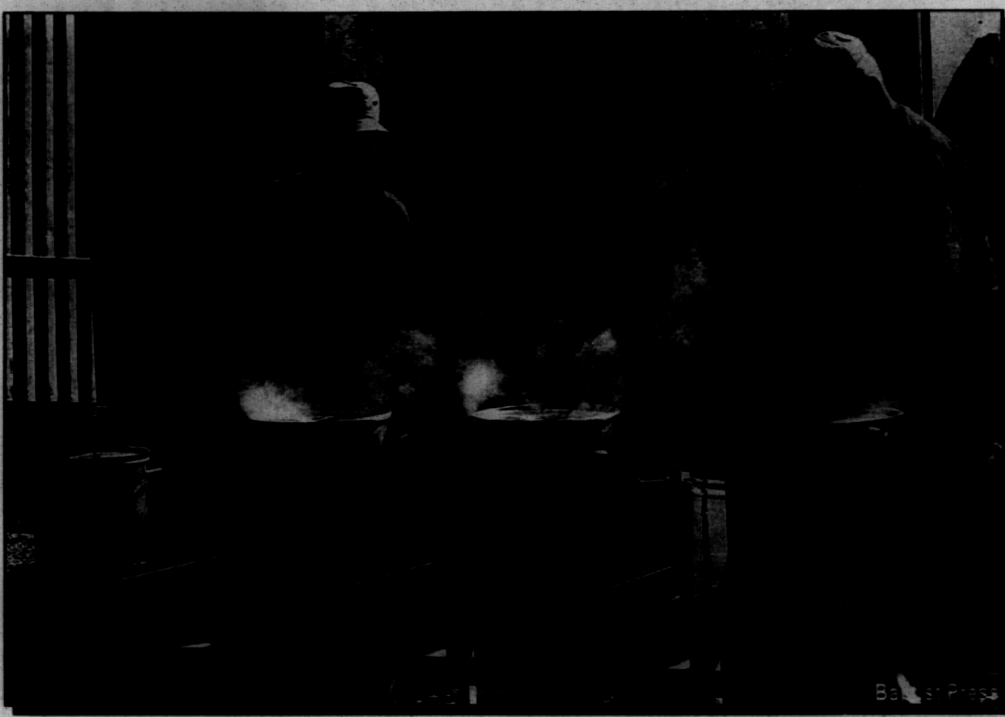
"I was very elated and came away from the meeting encouraged," he said.

Merritt said the six religious leaders spent 30 minutes with the president talking about the importance of Americans to come together spiritually and the importance of faith.

"Those were the things on his heart and mind," Merritt said. "He shared with us that he is being very deliberate and he is going to uphold his responsibility to defend this nation."

"This meeting was a signal that this is a president who understands the foundation of this nation is not financial, economical, or military," Merritt said. "The foundation of this nation is spiritual."

At times, Merritt said, the president became emotional. "He is a man of deep faith," he said. "The president is without question a compassionate conservative. His heart is broken



FEEDING THE HUNGRY — J. B. Banks (left) and Max Campbell monitor the cooking pots during meal preparation on site at the Tennessee Disaster Relief staging area in New York City. United Parcel Service granted permission for the team to setup in their truck parking lot. The men attend Haywood Hills Church, Nashville. (BP Photo by Gibbs Frazier)

over what has happened."

Merritt said the president requested prayer from the group of leaders.

"He wanted to share with us his need for prayer and his need for wisdom during these days," Merritt said. "Physically, he is doing well. Emotionally, he is totally at peace. He knows where he wants to lead the nation."

Merritt said the religious leaders stood in a circle with the president, clasped hands, and prayed.

"For a president to take 30 minutes to spend with religious

leaders tells you where his priorities are," Merritt said. "The fact that we were able to interact with him in that type of setting is remarkable."

"He listened more than he spoke," Merritt recounted.

While some ministers offered counsel to the president, Merritt said he simply offered a word of encouragement.

"As fellow believers we believe in the sovereignty of God. On the one hand, God knew what was going to happen on Sept. 11, but he also knew who would be sitting in the White House."

"I believe that President Bush is God's man for this hour. God's hand is on him. I encouraged him to humble himself to the Lord and God will lead him in a divine, providential way," Merritt said.

After the meeting, Merritt asked the president how Christians could pray for him.

"First, he said to pray for wisdom; second, strength; third for clarity of thought; and he asked us to say a special prayer for his wife, daughters, and family that God would protect them and he would be a godly husband and godly father," Merritt said.

At the end of the meeting, Merritt said he shook the president's hand and told him that "I loved him."

"That's when he looked at me and said, 'James, tell all my Southern Baptist friends how much I love

them as well,'" Merritt said.

While Merritt said he never dreamed he would be in the Oval Office, he said the most impressive memory of the prayer time was the president.

"Again, what I will remember is that we have a president who has a genuine love for Christ," Merritt said.

Prior to the Oval Office gathering, Merritt attended a noontime meeting at the White House with ministers from 30 other denominations including evangelist Franklin Graham and Christian author Max Lucado.

Md. leaders to instruct Miss. pastors

The Partnership Missions and Strategic Missions Departments of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) will host 20 African-American pastors and lay leaders from Prince George's Association in Maryland October 5-8, as they conduct training sessions for MBCB's African-American churches in the areas of Sunday School, deacon ministry, men's ministry, and stewardship. Simultaneous conferences will be held October 6 from 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at Solid Rock Church at 502 Canon Street in Greenville, and at Gateway Church at 1130 West Main Street (Highway 13) in Lumberton. The Maryland pastors will preach in Mississippi Baptist churches on the morning of October 7, and then gather for a special 6 p.m. service at Oak Forest Church, Jackson. The public is invited. For more information, contact the MBCB Partnership Missions Department at (601) 292-3398, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 398. E-mail: vfairley@mbcb.org.

SBC relief workers start packing in NYC, D.C.

NEW YORK CITY (BP) — Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Disaster Relief operations in New York City and Washington, D.C. are scaling back after more than two weeks of deployment, and leaders say they continue to receive expressions of thanks from the many who have

found respite and comfort through the efforts of volunteers.

A total of 265 volunteers have contributed to the effort, which has resulted in preparation of more than 215,000 hot meals for those responding to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Of those volunteers, 21 have been chaplains active in New York in and around the affected area, including the morgue at "Ground Zero," the name given by rescue workers to the area containing the fallen World Trade Center towers.

A total of six Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force members served in New York City as chaplains and counselors. They returned home on September 25.

The North Carolina mobile kitchen based in the south parking lot of the Pentagon closed the evening of Sept. 28 as the number of workers at the site began to decline.

In New York, efforts are underway to reduce the number of units deployed and consolidate remaining efforts at Floyd Bennett Airport in Brooklyn.

"We're looking at possibly (winding) down on the feeding and looking at a long-term response," said Mickey Caison, national director for Southern Baptist Disaster Relief and a staff member of the North American Mission Board.

The large majority of the meals prepared by Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, particularly in New York City, were delivered by the American Red Cross to respite centers near major work sites.

In Washington, D.C., most of the meals have been served to workers directly at the site, although some also are delivered by Red Cross volunteers.

The role of Southern Baptist chaplains has also begun scaling down, Caison said.

New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani has indicated he is going to use only local chaplains to assist with the ongoing response, Caison said, meaning that Southern Baptist chaplains currently on the scene will not be replaced.

"We continue to look at opportunities of church-to-church partnerships and some things we might do with pastors in the future," Caison said.

The Southern Baptist Disaster Relief network, which includes more than 20,000 trained volunteers, is coordinated nationally by the North American Mission Board in cooperation with state Southern Baptist conventions. For more information and updates, visit www.namb.net.

Mississippi Baptists have set up a special fund for the relief efforts in New York City and Washington, D.C. Gifts to the fund are tax deductible, and 100% of the gifts goes to the relief efforts.

To contribute to the fund, make checks payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) with the notation, "New York City." Mail to the MBCB Business Office, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.



WRAPPING UP — Bob Vickers (left), the North American Mission Board's director of chaplaincy, visits with a member of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Disaster Relief team, which was stationed under the Brooklyn Bridge in New York City and finished preparing meals on September 28. (BP photo by Jim Burton)

Baptist who escaped Pentagon ponders loss

WASHINGTON (BP) — Carol Stewart rarely watches television, but on Sept. 11 she flipped it on after her husband, Jim, called and told her two hijacked planes had smashed into the World Trade Center towers.

A short time later, Jim, a commander in the Navy, called home again. "Carol," he said from the Pentagon, "we've been hit. They're evacuating the building."

Jim hung up. Carol, a mother of four, ran back to the television and saw an image she'll never forget.

Flames were shooting skyward from the Pentagon. Another hijacked airline had deliberately crashed into the five-story building, entering close to where her husband's office was located.

Carol stood and stared in stunned disbelief as reporters described how damaged parts of the Pentagon were collapsing. "I kept wondering where Jim was," she told the Florida Baptist Witness. "Had he gotten out? Was he ever coming home again? I was shocked and amazed. I just kept praying."

A few hours after those constant, fervent prayers, Carol beheld another unforgettable sight when Jim came walking through their front door.

"I felt it was a miracle," Carol said. "Jim didn't even have a car. He took the Metro home. I hadn't thought it would have been working."

Stewart, a Navy staff assessment director, was at work in the Pentagon when the attack took place. The Stewarts moved to the Washington area last summer after having lived in Florida eight years.

The Stewarts said they saw God at work even in the midst of Sept. 11's massive tragedy. "This could have been much worse," Stewart said, explaining that the section of the Pentagon that the airplane cut through was recently renovated and in a state of flux due to some offices being relocated.

Stewart said he was grateful his entire division got out unharmed, but he was quick to add while fighting tears that three of his close friends did not.

One was a Naval Academy classmate; another was a member of First Church, Springfield, Va., where the Stewarts attend.

"That man was younger than me," Stewart said. "He had a 4-year-old daughter, a 2-year-old daughter, and his wife is expecting another baby."

Stewart said it's hard for people to comprehend how enormous the Pentagon is, which he feels makes it all the more amazing that so many people got out alive.

"We all went into the center courtyard," Stewart recounted. "I saw part of an airplane flap there. It had come all the way in through five rings of buildings."

"There were many people coming out with gashes and burns and many, I'd say, with psychological shock. People were dazed. Our admiral spoke to everyone for a few minutes, and after making sure who was accounted for, he told us to get out of there and go home."

Stewart said security was tight and the atmosphere slightly chaotic as the mass exodus ensued. About 25,000 people who worked in the building were leaving a crime scene — a place filled with flames, choking black smoke, and the smell of aviation fuel.

"Shortly after all this took place, I heard someone who lost a family member in the plane say this must have been God's will. I do not believe it is God's perfect will for any person to be murdered. His will is for us to turn our back on evil and to depend on him," he said.

Stewart said there is a need for great prayer during the coming days, weeks, months, and years. "Pray for the many directly touched by this," he advised. "The loss is unfathomable."

"We must also pray for those behind this evil. You don't do that because you want to or even because you could do that on your own. We must pray for our enemies because Jesus commanded it."

"Forgiveness does not mean those people will not have consequences to face or that we should not take appropriate action to bring justice and to defend our people."

"Praying for God to help us forgive means we won't harbor poison bitterness and hatred in our hearts."

Stewart also asked people to pray daily for President Bush and for all of the nation's leaders and law enforcement officials to have God's wisdom and discernment.

The Stewarts know the power of prayer. From the first moment she heard about the New York tragedy, through the telephone calls from Jim, until the time her husband got home safely, Carol said she was in constant communication with God.

"When Jim got home," she said, "we went to pray with some of the families who still had loved ones not accounted for."



The Stewart Family

AN OPEN LETTER OF ADMIRATION AND APPRECIATION TO MY FELLOW AMERICANS

For the past three weeks I have seen you in a different light and have walked with you at a different pace than ever before. Together we have watched a deadly drama of hate unfold before our eyes in New York City, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania.

What was to be the sinister acts of plotting terrorists that would destroy us, instead became a world stage on which thousands of wonderful American workers came to be performers of acts of love and courage never before witnessed in our land.

The stage stretched from sea to shining sea. Your brave hearts have raised the bar to a new height for us and future generations when we try to explain heroism.

The expressions of care and the attempts to rescue without any thought of life or limb has repeatedly created emotional overload for most of us. When all is said and written, it is possible that September 11, 2001, could go down as the worst and the best day in American history.

I, like many of you, have been concerned about the economic conditions in our land and especially now with the additional impact brought on



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

by this disaster and impending war. I, too, trust that things will turn around and the downward spiral will be stopped, but while stocks, jobs, orders, and incomes have been down — some items have gone up:

- Flag sales and flags on display have been at an all-time high. The patriotic drought of Vietnam has ended.

- Our sensitivity to what is really important has been raised to new levels. As much as we love sports and entertainment, and even our labor, we have suddenly realized that there are issues and people more important than the games of life.

- Church attendance has been up. According to national records, it seems to be at an all-time high. I have been in churches with some of you that were filled even when services had not been scheduled ahead of time.

- The reports are that the sales of Bibles and helpful Bible study materials have risen astronomically. That is good!

- Prayer has become a top item on the agenda of daily activities. We have prayed, not so much as an act of defiance against a court order or in an attempt to show the ACLU we could do it, but because we desired to get to God. I have watched you quietly, powerfully praying and I have joined in with you.

I've even watched as you have invited any and all to come and join you in prayer. As many of us know, Jesus said, "Come unto me all ye that labor or are heavy laden and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28) Keep on praying and keep on inviting people to Jesus!

- Appreciation is up. Appreciation for our leaders and appreciation among our leaders are at unprecedented levels. Democrats and Republicans, Independents and Dependents, black and white, north and south — everyone — have been supportive, encouraging, and appreciative.

It has been amazing. In fact, at times, it has been humorous to watch the media struggle to

cover some of the events as one of their most popular tools to get folks on different sides of an issue to face off has been set aside. Sincere appreciation for what others do is a healthy thing!

We keep hearing folks encouraging us to return to normal — to pre-September 11th activities. I understand what they are saying, but, my dear fellow Americans, I hope that some of the things we have demonstrated in these recent days might not ever return to what was "normal."

Respect, care, courage, compassion, graciousness, spiritual hunger, and reshuffling of priorities are good to hold on to and I trust will never be lost!

My prayer would be that these wonderful things that have come about through such a tragic and dastardly thing, would continue to be a part of our national atmosphere through which God can touch us, change us, and bless us.

Hopefully, we have tuned in and listened to his voice above all the noise and clutter, clamor, and commentary, to hear him say, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." (2 Chron. 7:14)

May God strengthen you, encourage you, lift you, and may God bless the entire world through America!

Hispanic Festival slated Oct. 6 in Laurel

Laurel's second annual Hispanic Festival will be held from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on October 6, in the parking center of Highland Church, 2513 North 7th Street, according to Cultural Center of Laurel.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



The Singing Churchmen held their fall tour Oct. 1-2. Milfred Valentine, dean of Winters School of Music, William Carey College, director; and Slater Murphy, Fairview Church, Columbus, accompanist. David Young, professor, William Carey College, instrumental ensemble leader; and Jerry Talley, Oak Forest Church, Jackson, Ringing Churchmen handbell choir director.

First Church, Winona, dedicated its new Family Life Center on August 5. The 21,418 square foot building was the culmination of five years of planning and working. Special guests in the afternoon dedication program included representatives of Brumfield, Hopton, Brumfield Associates, architects and Harris Constructors, general contractor. Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board gave dedication remarks. After the dedication ceremony, members and guests toured the new building. John L. Walker is pastor of First Church.



Walden and Adams

MS POSITIONS AVAILABLE

SEEKING FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC/YOUTH. Contact Woodland Baptist Church, 3033 Ridge Road, Columbus, MS 39705. Telephone: (662) 327-6689.

CHURCH AVERAGING 100 in Sunday School seeks full-time associate pastor/minister of music and youth. Please send resume to Calvary Baptist Church, 2878 Old Hwy. 27, Vicksburg, MS 39180; or fax to (601) 636-7574.

McAdams Church, Attala Association, will celebrate its 152nd anniversary on Oct. 14. Activities will include Sunday School at 10 a.m. and lunch followed by singing. Doug Hogg of Florida is the guest speaker. Jamie Moore is pastor.

1004 Mississippi Churches Can't Be Wrong.

More than 1000 churches throughout Mississippi put their faith in Wellington Associates for comprehensive insurance services including property, general, and specific liability, vehicle, workers compensation, and other coverages. Wellington guarantees a quality program, customized for your ministry, at the most competitive premium rates.

For references and more information, call Mike Brooks at 601-353-2400 or 1-800-442-0290.



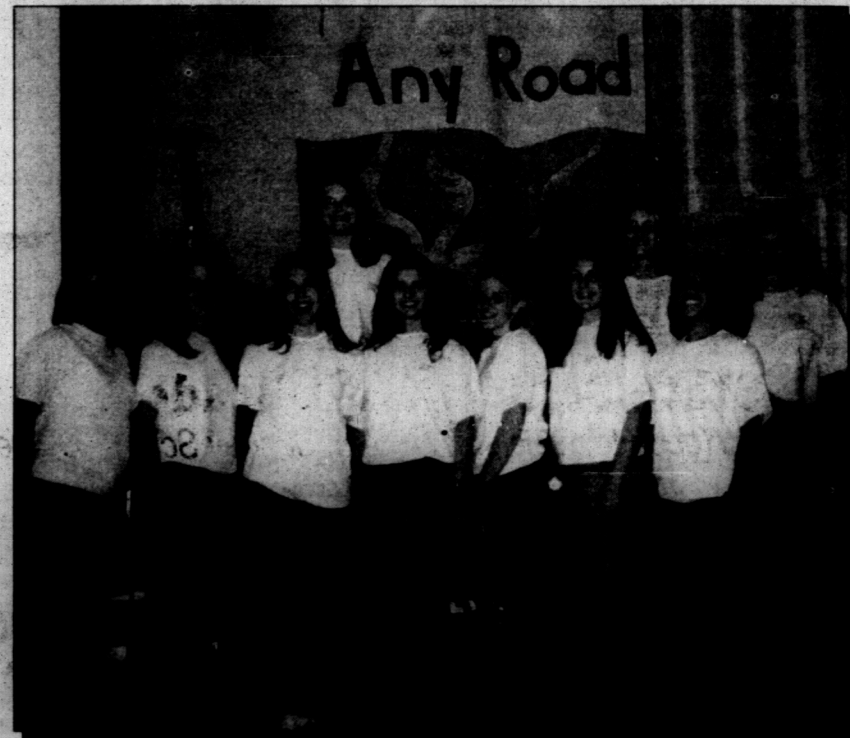
Wellington Associates, Inc.

Ken and Scott Lyle have made available to Mississippi Baptist pastors and others Lyle Lodge, a facility intended to provide a personal retreat from the worry and bustle of ministry. The cabin is close to Cossar State Park and about 15 minutes from Batesville. It has two bedrooms, a sleeping loft, and other amenities for a comfortable stay. The Lyles' intent is to give meaning to Matthew 11:28 —

"Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The lodge is available on a contribution basis, with a suggested gift of \$15 a day. For more information, contact Ken Lyle at (601) 924-9016 or Scott Lyle at (601) 925-0116.

Terry's Creek Church, Magnolia, will celebrate its 130th anniversary during the month of October. Four former pastors will preach at the 11 a.m. service each Sunday of the month. They are: Oct. 7, Breaux Tagueant of Hurley; Oct. 14, Bill Gardner of

Selma, Ala.; Oct. 21, James Sanders of Lucedale; and Oct. 28, homecoming, Jimmie Wood of Brandon. Dinner on the grounds on Oct. 28 will be followed by afternoon singing. For more information, call Catherine Brown at (601) 542-5234.



Acteens of West Heights Church, Pontotoc, recently presented their year end recognition service, Any Road, Any Cost. Acteens (from left) are Kacy Lee, Corrie Vitalis, Gloria Flamenco, Lindsey Gable, Maggie Long, Bethany Lee, Ellie Childers, Amber Morgan, Alison Wing, and Jordan Simmons. Leaders are Robin Childers and Little Long.

CLASSIFIED ADS

RATE: 60 cents per word; minimum of ten words; maximum of fifty words. Cash with order except on continuing advertising. Include name, address, zip code, and phone number in word count. No blind ads. **ONLY WRITTEN ADS ACCEPTED.**

ATTENTION MINISTERS and self employed. Finally affordable health insurance call (662) 568-3482. Underwritten by the Mega Life & Health Ins. Group.

INTERIOR ELEMENTS STAINED GLASS STUDIO: Custom church windows. Columbus - toll free (877) 477-1899. **ALLEN MDS-40-S DIGITAL ORGAN.** Perfect condition. Contact Jim or Susan Link @ (601) 264-2116.

NORRIS BOOKBINDING COMPANY, INC. Old Bibles rebound. Also church bulletins and hymnals. For more information call (662) 453-7424 or fax us at (662) 455-6743. Located at 107 North Stone Avenue, Greenwood, MS 38930.

PARADISE LANES: Mississippi's smoke and alcohol free Bowling Center. Call about Lock-ins, group rates, fund raisers, and leagues. Located at 820 Cooper Road, Jackson, MS, (601) 372-7700.

HEIDELBERG STAINED GLASS, Meridian. Design, Fabrication, Repair. Fax illustrations to (601) 483-7958 or call (800) 368-2705.

BRANSON, MO CONDO - sleeps six. Stay 3 nights, 4th free or 5 nights, 6th and 7th free. Free coffee, tea, and cocoa. \$100.00 daily. Register for free return trip. Accommodates large groups. Call early for reservations (662) 746-4632.

PEARL RIVER GLASS STUDIO, INC., (800) 771-3639; www.prgs.com. New stained glass church windows, repair and restoration, baptistery murals.

WE SPECIALIZE IN VANS Featuring 6 to 15 passenger vans, customized and panel vans. Daily and weekly rates. Auto & Truck Rental, Jackson (601) 948-3391. Since 1966.

1996 MINI BUS, 29 PASSENGER with jump seat for tour guide, TV, VCR, reclining seats, back 5 seats can be removed for additional storage. Please call (662) 488-0093.

CHURCH PEW UPHOLSTERY Free estimates. Davis Upholstery, Quitman, Miss., phone (601) 776-6617.

SUPER GRACE BEACH HOUSE for rent. Excellent for staff retreats or family vacations. Located in a private subdivision at the beach at Fort Morgan, Ala. Visit our website at <http://supergrace.jumptravel.com> or call Allan or Linda Rankin at (888) 784-4025.

GULFSHORES BEACHSIDE CONDO. Fantastic Fall special - 4 weeknights for \$160; 2-night weekend for \$120. Call Martha at (205) 554-1524 or Don at (251) 968-3222.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH IN Baltimore/Washington D.C. metropolitan area is seeking a dynamic individual to join our ministry team. The candidate should have a seminary degree with a strong background in music and a desire to work with young people. A letter of interest and a resume (including names, phone numbers, and addresses of at least three references) should be sent to: Search Committee, Glen Burnie Baptist Church, 7524 Old Stage Road, Glen Burnie, MD 21061.

WANTED: SPANISH MISSION in Pontotoc needs pews for its chapel. Please call (662) 489-1200.

PARKVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH in Alexandria, Louisiana, is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resume and reference to: 2101 Macarthur Drive, Alexandria, LA 71301.

CFI — PEWS, NEW & used. Baptistries, steeples, & stained glass, MS & AL: (800) 830-0583.

Jesus Christ

Requests the Honor
of Your Presence
in Heaven!

YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.
(I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

October 4, 2001

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

SENIORS

State Senior Adult Leadership Lab (open to ministers, officers, Sunday School teachers)

November 1-2, 2001

(registration 1:30 p.m., 11/1, adjourn 1:00 p.m., 11/2)

Camp Garaywa, Clinton (601-924-5062)

Cost: \$65 (meals and lodging) OR \$10 for Friday events with lunch only OR \$5 for workshops only (no meals or lodging)

Registration Deadline: October 29, 2001

Speakers: Bobby Shows, Dennis Daniels, Janie Walters and Horace Kerr. Music by R.L. and Beth Sigrest

Sponsored by the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department. For more info, contact Glenn Shows at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3900.

Bobby Shows

BAPTIST HYMNALS NEEDED FOR AFRICAN SEMINARY

The only seminary in Africa offering a graduate degree in church music is in Ogbomosho, Nigeria. Currently, most African church choirs sing only the melody of hymns from memory, for they have only the words without music.

Jimmy McCaleb, Church Music Department consultant, after teaching a course at this seminary, has a burden to provide our fellow Baptist musicians in Africa with 5,000 copies of the 1991 Baptist Hymnal. Their choirs could then proclaim the theology of our Baptist faith in beautiful four-part harmony! As of August, 3,000 hymnals have been given and sent.

You can help with a financial gift. One hymnal is \$5. A box of 20 is \$100. If you or your church group would like to participate in this ministry, please call Jimmy McCaleb at 601-292-3273, 1-800-748-1651 or E-mail him at jmccaleb@mbcb.org.

Checks may be made out to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and mailed to:

Jimmy McCaleb
MBCB

P.O. Box 530
Jackson, MS 39205

Young Musicians' Festival

April 6, 2002

**Mississippi College Coliseum, Clinton
Guest Clinician, Dr. Susan Messer**

Music: Order the winter *Young Musician's Magazine* from the dated literature order form.

Memorize: "God So Loved the World"
"Sing to the Lord"
"The Good Shepherd"



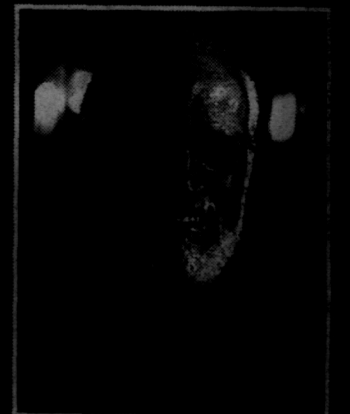
Susan Messer
Atlanta, Ga.

Two additional anthems will be available from the Church Music Dept. Watch for this information in the *Young Musician's* brochure to be mailed in November 2001.

Contact the Church Music Department, 1-800-748-1651, x 271, or in Jackson, 601-292-3271, or Sarah Talley for other information.

2002 Baptist Doctrine Study Preview - Hattiesburg

- **Main Street Baptist Church**
Hattiesburg
January 28, 2002
- **McLaurin Heights Baptist Church**
Pearl
January 29, 2002
- **First Baptist Church**
Grenada
January 31, 2002



Preregistration is requested. The cost is \$10, which includes brunch and a copy of this year's doctrinal study book, *Called to be Holy*, by Rick Melick.

**All
previews
are from
9 a.m.-noon**

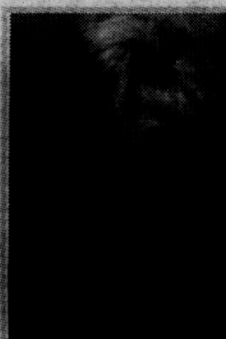


For more information, contact the Discipleship Department at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3900.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST MINISTERS' WIVES

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, JACKSON
MONDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2001
1:00-4:30 P.M.

Program Personnel



Shirley Futral,
Ridgeland; wife of Jim
Futral, executive direc-
tor-treasurer, Miss.
Baptist Convention
Board; mother, grand-
mother and pastor's
wife for over 35 years.

Tommye Lynn Porter,
Ridgeland; wife of Jimmy
Porter, executive director,
Christian Action
Commission, Miss.
Baptist Convention;
mother, grandmother and
pastor's wife for over
30 years.



• Inspiration, Fellowship, Personal Growth, Information, and
Support for the Minister's Wife!

• There is no cost for this conference. In order for us to better prepare,
please preregister, **even if you will not need child care.**

• Child care will be provided by First Baptist Church, Jackson.
Please indicate on the registration form the number and
age of children. The deadline for child care reservations is
October 22. If needed, the phone number for FBC, Jackson,
is 601-949-1900.

.....Registration Form.....

Complete the registration form and return to **Matt Buckles**, Church Administration-
Pastoral Ministries Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530 or fax to 601-714-7426 or
E-mail this information to mbuckles@mbcb.org.
For more information, call 1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800, ext. 305 in Jackson.

Name _____ Phone No. (h) _____ (w) _____
Church _____ Association _____
Home Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
Fax _____ E-mail _____
(If needed) Names and birth dates of preschool children needing child care _____

GA MISSIONS MADNESS

The Mississippi River Ministry Adventure

Saturday, November 3 • 9 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.
First Baptist Church, Natchez • \$5 per person

On Saturday, Nov. 3, all GAs (1st - 6th grade girls) and leaders in our state are invited to join the GA planning team for an imaginary journey on the Mississippi River. On each stop of our journey we will learn about a missionary and one type of missions work in each of the seven states involved in the Mississippi River Ministry. Some of the ministries include face painting, building a cardboard house, painting a mural, making craft dolls, assembling dental hygiene kits and meeting a missionary.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. The steamboat leaves the dock at 9:30 and returns at 3:45. Early registration deadline is October 19. If space is still available, groups may register after October 19, but the cost is \$7.50.

Each GA needs to bring the following:

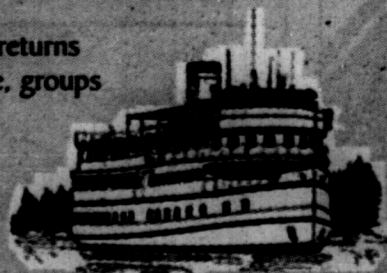
1. A sack lunch (drinks and dessert are provided)
2. Money for our mission offering
3. Dental hygiene items (small sizes of toothpaste, toothbrush, mouthwash and dental floss)

Each GA leader needs to bring the following:

1. A camera
2. A blanket for the picnic lunch

Accommodation suggestions:

- Ramada Inn 601-446-6311 • Days Inn 601-445-8291
- Comfort Inn 601-446-5500 • Radisson 601-445-6000



For more info contact Debbie Sills in the WMMA: Call 1-800-748-1651, 601-292-3320 (Jackson); or E-mail debbie@mbcb.org



2002 Mississippi
Baptist All-State
Youth Choir
and Orchestra

auditions

October 2001 Choral and Orchestral Auditions

Saturday, 20th	10 a.m.-2 p.m.	FBC, Brookhaven
Thursday, 25th	4-8 p.m.	Fairview BC, Columbus
Saturday, 27th	10 a.m.-3 p.m.	North Oxford BC, Oxford

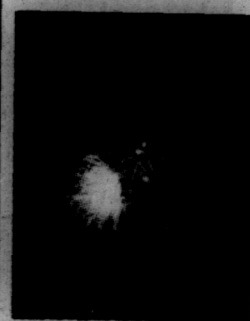
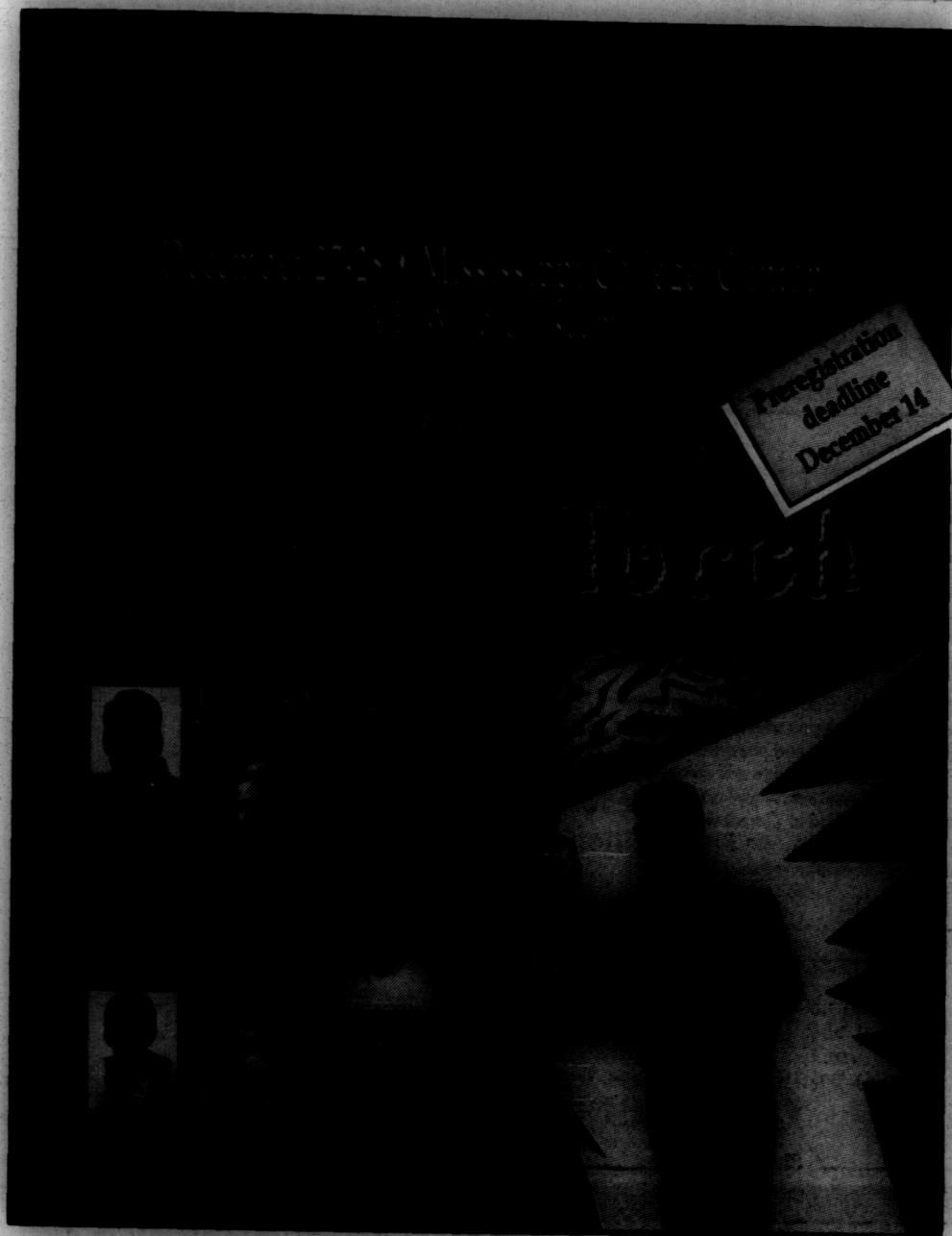
November 2001 Choral and Orchestral Auditions

Saturday, 3rd	12-2 p.m.	North Greenwood BC, Greenwood
Saturday, 10th	10 a.m.-4 p.m.	William Carey College, Hattiesburg
Thursday, 15th	4-8 p.m.	FBC, Meridian
Saturday, 17th	10 a.m.-4 p.m.	Aven Hall, Mississippi College, Clinton

(NOTE: ALL instrumentalists will be expected to audition vocally.)

Instrumental auditions will include:

- A prepared piece • Scales • Sight reading • Technique and tune
- For more info contact the Church Music Department at
1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800 (Jackson)



There is a lot of power in the
smaller church
Sunday School.

Come find out how to unleash
that power to reach and minister to
more people in your community.

Smaller Church Sunday School Workshops

October 9 & 16

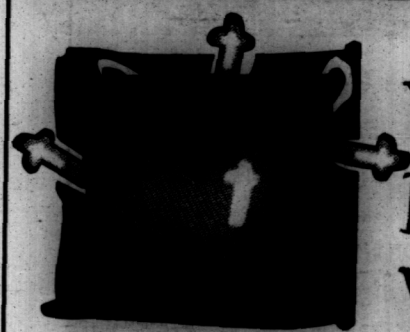
October 9, 2001 • 7-9 p.m.
Tuscumbia Baptist Church
Booneville

October 16, 2001 • 7-9 p.m.
New Prospect Baptist Church
Brookhaven

*Conferences will be offered for all Sunday School
leaders who work with preschool, children, youth
and adult classes. Special conferences will be offered
for general officers and for pastors.*

- No registration required
- No childcare provided • No cost

Sponsored by the Sunday School Department of the
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. For more information,
contact us at 1-800-748-1651 or (601) 968-3800 in Jackson, or by
fax at (601) 714-7430, or on the internet at www.mbc.org.



Youth Ministers Workshop

"Keeping Your Heart for God"

November 12-14, 2001
Lake Tiak O'Khata, Louisville



Rob Turner
Student Evangelist
Conference Keynote Speaker
Kettering, Ohio



Dave Hunt
Associate Student Minister
First Baptist Church
Nashville



Chuck Gartman
Youth Ministry Services
Sunday School Dept., LifeWay
Nashville

For more info, contact the Church Administration-Pastoral
Ministries Dept. at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3305 (Jackson).

Join us in a worship service led by the
Mississippi Baptist Symphony Orchestra.



Fairview
Baptist Church
Columbus

October 14
7 p.m.

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

IN CONCERT
 Sunday, October 21, 2001, 6 p.m.
 First Baptist Church, Granada

Pray this day for...

October 5-18, 2001

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

OUR PRAYER IN A CRISIS -

"O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.

2 Chronicles 20:12

For: (1) Mission Mississippi Picnic, Smith Park, downtown Jackson; (2) Pray over the spirit of deception at Shi-An's Great Mosque, and for the many Muslims in Shaan-shi to see the Lord Jesus as the complete and final revelation of the One True God in China.

For: (1) World Hunger Day (CAC); (2) Fran Brown is a part of the South Strand Pastoral Counseling Service at Surfside Beach, Murrells Inlet, S.C. Pray for her as she counsels individuals through various traumas of life. Pray for a steady confidence in the Lord.

For: (1) Church Related Vocations Banquet, (CAPM); (2) Pray that Satan will be bound and unable to hinder the spread of the gospel in the Dodoma, Tanzania, area. Many Christians are sharing the gospel, but hundreds of thousands are resistant to making it their own.

A missionary was robbed and beaten unconscious the first part of September. He was found and revived by two national co-workers. Pray that God will give his wife and children peace and freedom from fear. Many good things are happening in this area so the enemy wants to stop it.

For: (1) Small Church Sunday School Conference; Tuscumbia BC, Booneville, (SS); (2) Student Day at the Baptist Building, (CAPM); (3) The University Students and Professionals Team is attempting to start a new church the Collingwood neighborhood in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

For: Small Church Sunday School Conference, New Prospect BC, Brookhaven, (SS); (2) Women make up a large majority of the Chinese church and many play key leadership roles. Pray for mature men to also be raised up and fill their roles as servant-leaders.

Throughout the day today pray for the Prayerwalk Volunteer team from Broadmoor Baptist Church, Jackson, who will be traveling to Bogota. Pray for safety, health, vision, trust, and confidence in God's sovereignty the nine days they are in that country.

After serving faithfully in Bosnia for a number of years, Bob and Jerry Worley have begun their final stateside assignment before retirement. Pray that God will show them exactly what He wants them to do and provide for them as they seek to know and do His will.

The Wayuu, nomadic tribe of the northern desert of Colombia, had no written language until recently. Materials are being written to teach them to read their language. The Bible will be published in their language in mid-2002. Pray that the Wayuu will read it.

Ask God to intervene on behalf of missionaries Ted and Brenda Daniels and provide a working telephone line and an operating E-mail server and active connection in Zimbabwe. They have had a very limited use of their phone this year (maybe two weeks) where they live.

For: (1) Church Related Vocations Banquet, Blue Mountain College, (CAPM); (2) State Church Media Library Conference, FBC, Columbus, (DBS); (3) Mother/Daughter Overnight, Camp Garaywa, (WMU).

For: Mississippi Baptist Conference of the Deaf, Camp Garaywa, (SM); (2) The SBC States' Prayer Coordinators' Conference, Toronto, Canada; (3) For a Bible study that began recently with members of the Santiago, Chile, house church and new participants.

A deaf leader named J., and Stan and Lynn Stepleton visited deaf prospects in an area of Santo Domingo named Guarano. Nine deaf people were found and all are interested in beginning a deaf Bible study. Lift up J. and the deaf Christian as they pray for a location to have the first Bible studies.

For: (1) Cultural Awareness, Hopewell Indian BC, Standing Pine, (SM); (2) Praise Team/Ensemble Festival, McLaurin Heights BC, Pearl, (CM); (3) Christian Education Clinic, Longview Hts. BC, Olive Branch, (DBFM).



Partnership Missions CELEBRATION

November 9-10, 2001

Friday, November 9

FBC, Jackson, 425 North State Street
Featuring:

- Celebration Banquet - 6:30 p.m.
- Partnership Displays by Participants
- Music/Testimonies
- Mission Impact - Mississippi - David Michel
- Partnership Updates - Fieldside Coordinators
- Church Planting Movement - David Jackson



David Michel

Saturday, November 10

Baptist Building, 515 Mississippi Street
Featuring:

- Continental Breakfast - 7:30 - 8:15 a.m.
- Devotional
- New Mission Opportunities - Panel
- Celebration Conferences by Partnership Groups



David Jackson

The Partnership Missions Celebration is open to anyone interested in missions.

Banquet Cost: \$10 Reservations required by November 6
Call: 601-292-3398 by November 6

RESERVATION FORM

Partnership Missions Celebration, November 9-10, 2001

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____ No. of Reservations _____

Please fill out form and mail to: Partnership Missions Department, MBCB
P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530

LAY MISSIONS CONFERENCE

October 29, 2001

God is moving through volunteers

Missions Banquet

Keynote Speakers

Don Dent

IMB Regional Leader

SE Asia & Oceania

Michael and Valerie Coles

Seventh Baptist Church

Baltimore, Md.

Special Music:

Luz del Mundo

(Light of the World)

Interest Conferences, 3 p.m.

Agricultural Missions

Educational Missions

Volunteers in Missions

Construction Missions

Campers on Mission

Missions Banquet, 5 p.m.

Dinner

Music

Recognitions

Message

Registration Form (Deadline: October 24, 2001)

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Enclosed is \$ for _____ dinner reservations at \$8.50 per person.

Mail to: Men's Ministry Department, MBCB; Lay Missions Banquet
P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530

Sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Missions Strategy Team

For info contact Jim Didlake in Men's Ministry: Call 1-800-748-1651, 601-292-3338 (Jackson); or E-mail: jdidlake@mbcb.org

HOUSE TOPS

THANKS FOR HELP

Editor:

Our family had the privilege of being the first missionaries to complete the new 2+2 seminary/IMB program and be appointed with a short four month turnaround. During that hectic time we were aided by two wonderful groups in our home state of Mississippi.

One of the greatest needs of stateside missionaries is transportation. Whether it be for four months, six months, or even a year, this is an major expense for the missionary.

The Macedonian Call Foundation of Mississippi stepped in to fill this need with a clean, well-maintained vehicle that was just right for our family. Their ministry to the missionaries of Mississippi cannot be spoken of too highly.

Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hearon and W.C. Young for meeting such a critical need for the overseas worker.

I want to encourage other Mississippi missionaries on stateside assignment to contact

the Macedonian Call Foundation at (601) 956-7770 when they need a car.

Secondly, our church, Fairview Church, Columbus, stepped in to provide us space to assemble our household goods for packing and crating.

This is often a nightmare for the new missionary as they try to sort and prepare everything for the movers.

We were able to pack and fill our crate before arriving at appointment which eased the stress of leaving and allowed us to enjoy the celebration.

Thank you dear brothers and sisters of Fairview Church.

Mississippi has a proud heritage in missions and missions support, and we want to commend you with a hearty "well done!"

Mike Packard
Missionary to West Africa

SAFE IN BRAZIL

Editor:

This is just a note to say that

we, like you, are very saddened by the events of Sept. 11. Our prayers continue to go out to the victims and their families, and also to the President and all those in leadership positions.

Please be assured that our family is fine here in Brazil.

We are safe and as always trust in the Lord daily for his care and protection over us.

This tragedy has shown all of us the brevity of life and the urgency to preach the Gospel unto all nations.

"Seek the Lord and His strength; Seek His face evermore!" (1 Chron. 16:10).

Stu and Liz Butler
Missionaries to Brazil

BE OBEDIENT

Editor:

My heart was made heavy as I looked at the picture you painted for us as to what drugs and alcohol are doing to our young people (September 6 issue of The Baptist Record),

but I want to take issue with you on one or two things.

One, you said that lawmakers had done their part by raising the drinking age.

Bologna. If they are truly lawmakers, why not write a law that would also stop states from selling liquor licenses?

If it is wrong for young people to drink alcohol, then it has to be wrong for adults.

Well, I know why: "The love of money is the root of all evil."

I say if the adults would stop leading the way for drinking and all the other things that are wrong, we would not have to worry about our youth.

Come on, folks. Stop being hypocrites.

Also, the editor said the law enforcement agencies were diligent in enforcing the laws which are on the books.

Bologna again. The few good officers that we have are not allowed to enforce the law because the "big-wigs" in law have too many friends who are breaking the law.

We know we must have laws and rules by which to live, and we have them. They are in the Word of God.

Why not just be obedient to those laws?

Alton Garrison
Sardis

WAKEUP CALL

Editor:

On September 11, terrorists gave our beloved United States a wakeup call as Osama Bin Laden (no doubt) continues his "holy war" against America.

The senseless deaths and destruction caused most of us to experience a wide range of emotions as we were reminded of how fragile life really is and how close to eternity we are.

President Bush has declared war against terrorism. It will be up to the governments of the world, including our own which God has ordained, to determine appropriate responses to such evil — as in the past when we or our friends were confronted with a Tojo, a Hitler, a Qadhafi, and a Saddam.

The war against terrorists could be a long and arduous crusade with victories few and far between.

Let the crusade begin nevertheless, but let it be bathed in the prayers of Christian people who have humbled themselves before Almighty God.

Then Christians in general, and Southern Baptists in particular, must embark on another crusade, and in faith, and through faith, seek victories related to helping prepare souls for their eternity advent which can come suddenly, as it did for thousands on September 11.

Claude Luttrell
Jackson



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

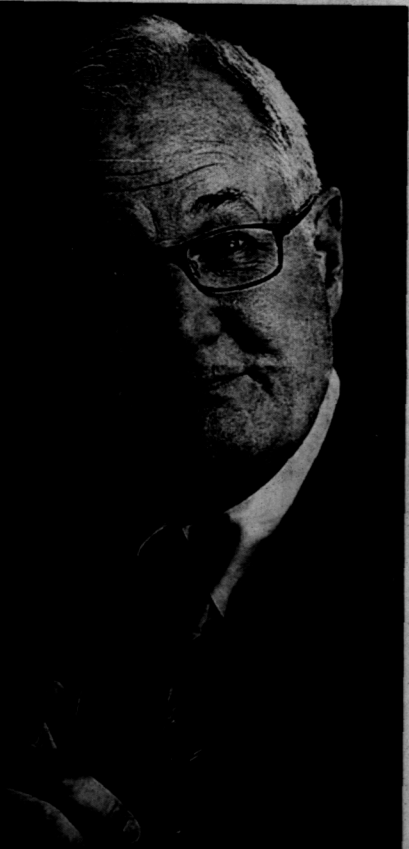
No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



Porter, Holloway, and Salley

Valley Park Church, Valley Park, celebrated homecoming on Aug. 5. Addie Mae Holloway was recognized for 50 years perfect attendance in Sunday School. Bob Gilliland, ordained by Valley Park Church, pastor of Gooden Lake Church, delivered the message. Pictured (from left) are Sally Porter, Sunday School director; Holloway; and Dennis Salley Jr., pastor.

Bay Vista Church, Biloxi, will celebrate its 40th anniversary on Oct. 14. Regular Sunday morning services will be followed by dinner on the grounds and anniversary service at 1:30 p.m. Kevin Clifton Jr. is pastor.

GAs of Webster Association had a lock-in Aug. 17 to kick off the new year. Mathiston Church hosted the event that lasted until 8 a.m. the following morning. Churches represented were Mathiston, Mantee, Walthall, Lollars Grove, Clarkston, and First Church, Eupora.



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Northcrest Church, Meridian, will present Al Denson in concert on Oct. 18 at 7 p.m. This performance is a benefit concert for The King's Academy. For information on tickets, contact The King's Academy at (601) 485-2689 or Asa Haynes at (601) 693-2816 or 485-5916.

Second Hispanic Festival will be held at Highland Church, Laurel, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Oct. 6. Gustavo Salazar is the coordinator. For additional information, call (601) 428-8493.

The youth ministry of **Tylertown Church, Tylertown,** will present Judgement House, Oct. 25, 27, 28, 30, and 31, 6-10 p.m. Reservations can be made by calling (601) 876-3436. For additional information, contact Pete Pearce, youth minister, at the phone number above from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. A donation of \$2 per person must accompany any reservations of 10 or more people.

Park Haven Church, Laurel, will present Kathy Lee in concert on Oct. 7 for the morning service at 10:35 a.m. Also, the church will change the time for the Wednesday night services to 6 p.m. during the winter schedule.

The youth of **Rawls Springs, Hattiesburg,** recently presented Illuminating Power. It is a ministry that portrays the power of God and his love for people. To see this program, contact Chet Dear, minister of students, at (601) 268-2801.



Children (pictured) of Hillcrest Church, Jackson, display their American flags that they made during K.I.D.S. church.

HOMEcomings

McCool, McCool: Oct. 14; services at 11 a.m. and lunch to follow; Dan West, interim pastor.

Mt. Pisgah, Enid: Oct. 14; Common Garments, music guest, 10:30 a.m.; worship with Dan Stroud, 11 a.m.; fellowship dinner at noon; and worship, 1:30 p.m.; Marty Evans is pastor.

New Hope, Foxworth: Oct. 7; 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Jim Futral, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, speaker; Gary Hodges, music.

First, Oloh, Sumrall: Oct. 21; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 10:45 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch and singing; Eddie Parker, interim pastor, speaker; Bill Herman, music.

New Goodhope, Pulaski: Oct. 14; service, 10:30 a.m.; Timothy Phillips, speaker; Vivian Phipps and her son Gerald will be honored by the church.

Enon, Grenada: Oct. 7; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., and worship at 11 a.m.

New Hope (Northwest): Oct. 14; worship, 10:45 a.m.; lunch, 12:15 p.m.; afternoon service of songs and memories, 2 p.m.; Cliff Butler, pastor.

Central Church, McNeill: Oct. 28; Clark Stewart, former

pastor, guest speaker at 11 a.m. service; dinner on the grounds following morning worship; Shallow Creek singing at 1:30 p.m.; Billy Galloway, pastor.

Clear Branch, Florence: Oct. 14; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; lunch; and 1:30 p.m. singing; Ricky Gray, Flowood, guest speaker; Lori McDade, Jackson, guest soloist.

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BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

William Carey College student, Jason Ruiz of Gulfport, was awarded the prestigious Rotary Ambassadorial Fellowship, according to the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International. Ruiz, a graduate of Carey with two degrees in communication and history, received

the scholarship which will allow him to attend any school in the world all expenses paid for one year. The scholarship is given to a college student who maintains an excellent grade point average and who completes the application process. The process consists of two written essays and an

interview with a panel of nine Rotarians from across the district. Ruiz chose Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, where he will study history. Pictured are Tom Huebner, director of forensics; and Jason and Jennifer Ruiz.

Archie and Barbara Herrin and daughter Michelle of Columbia have set up a scholarship for church-related vocation and missions vocation students at William Carey College (WCC). The scholarship honors the memory of their son and brother, Clay Herrin, and has been named the Clayton (Clay) Allen Herrin Memorial Scholarship Trust Fund. Archie Herrin is missions director for Lawrence, Marion, and Walthall associations. Clay Herrin, a 1997 graduate of WCC, died of muscular dystrophy on July 6, 2000. Pictured (from left) are Barbara Herrin; Michelle Herrin; Archie Herrin; Jane Newell, associate director of the Mississippi Baptist



The Herrins, Newell, and Kennedy

Foundation, receiving checks from Archie Herrin, for the Clayton (Clay) Allen Herrin Memorial Scholarship Trust Fund; and Larry Kennedy, president of WCC.

The new administrative staff for the 2001-2002 school year at Blue Mountain College (pictured, standing, from left) are Stephanie Tisdale, office and program assistant for the Baptist Student Union, and Angie Gossett, financial aid assistant; (seated) Rhonda Cockrell, admissions office manager.



Tisdale, Gosset, and Cockrell

REVIVAL DATES

First, Brookhaven: Oct. 7-10; Sunday, 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., meal, 11:45 a.m., 5 p.m., and services at 6:30 p.m.; James Lewis, evangelist; Mike Harland, music.

New Hope, Foxworth: Oct. 8-10; 7 p.m.; Bryan Upshaw, evangelist; David Grimsley, music.

South McComb, McComb: homecoming, Oct. 7-10; Sunday, 10:30 a.m., lunch in fellowship hall, 1 p.m. service with concert by The Providentials, McComb; Jerry Webber, Illinois, guest speaker; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; speakers will be David Williams, Monticello, Monday; Barry Cutrer, Jayess, Tuesday; and Barry Ward, Magnolia, Wednesday; Don Brown, McComb, music; Ted Bowlin, pastor.

First, Chicora: Oct. 7-10; Sunday, praise service, 6 p.m., worship, 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Dave Moran, Laurel, speaker; Kent Miller, Laurel, music; David Roberson, pastor

Tylertown (Walthall): Oct. 7-10; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Wayne VanHorn, Columbia, evangelist; Billy Bob Dempsey, Picayune, music; Michael Glenn, pastor.

Monticello, Monticello: Oct. 14-17; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 6:30 p.m.; Harold Bryson, Clinton, evangelist; Charlotte Ready, Monticello, music; musical guests are: Sun. and Mon., Paid In Full; Tue., The Daniels Family Quartet; and Wed., For Heaven's Sake; Jon Daniels, pastor.

Corinth, Purvis: Oct. 14-17; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; James Messer, Theodore, Ala., evangelist; Philip Butler, Sumrall, music; David Strebeck, pastor.

Silver Springs, Osyka: Oct. 14-19; Sunday, Sunday School, 10 a.m.; services 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Jimmy Houston, evangelist; Wayne Hall, pastor.

Clifton (Scott): Oct. 10-14; Wed., 7 p.m.; Thurs.-Sat., noon and 7 p.m.; Sunday, 10:45 a.m. and 7 p.m.; dinner on the grounds following Sunday morning service; Sonny Adkins, evangelist; John Alumbaugh, music; Cliff Davis, pastor.

Fellowship, Ellisville: Oct. 7-12; Sunday, Sunday School, 10 a.m., worship, 11 a.m., discipleship training, 5 p.m., and worship, 6 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Valton Douglas, Moselle, evangelist; Steve Graham, Petal, music; Hiram Eaves, pastor.

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

The hope for every home

Deuteronomy 4-6

By Wayne Marshall

When a new baby is brought home from the hospital, several questions arise: How will I do as a parent? What will my child be like?

These questions deserve an answer. For the children of Israel it meant that they were to deliberately and pointedly teach their children about their faith.

Teaching the children was a major detail to the Israelites. The stories of faith were passed from generation to generation. As we study today's passage pay close attention to the reasons for teaching as well as the responsibilities for teaching children about God and faith from the home.

The command to teach (4:9-10). Parents are given the distinct responsibility of sharing

with their children the truths of walking with God. They are told to "take heed to keep" their souls.

God was letting them know that they were to guard their heart, mind, and body. They were to protect themselves by keeping a guard around their lives so that they were ready to share with their children the things of God.

Sharing with one's family was so important that it was to be guarded as one would guard his monetary livelihood.

Twice in these two verses the parents are told to share with their children specific events that would be remembered and passed down from generation to generation.

They are told to watch themselves lest they forget (become



Marshall

oblivious to) the things of God.

Teachers, in this case parents, must fulfill their command to teach and this cannot be done if they depart, (the word means to leave undone), their personal account before God.

The concern of teaching (6:1-3, 24-25). Chapter

six begins with an admonition to keep. God gave his instructions, verdicts, and boundaries for the people and they are to teach these same characteristics to their children.

The Word suggests four reasons for this type of approach to teaching. First, they were instructed to obey in verse one. "Do them" comes as a command to be followed completely.

Then in verse two they were to be inspired as they taught. They would see and know the awesome reverence of God. This thought is repeated in v. 24.

Finally there is the assurance of increase in their lives as a result of staying true to these teachings in their home and

before their children. How awesome would be their spiritual peace as they learned, grew, and then taught their families to do the same.

The context for teaching (6:4-7). This passage is part of the Shema, Judaism's most important and most often quoted Scripture passage. The gospels include Jesus' use of this heritage in several passages (Mt. 22:37, 38; Mk. 12:29-30; Lk. 10:27).

Verse five also was the answer Jesus gave to the question concerning the first and greatest commandment (Mt. 22:37-38). When does one teach?

These verses tell us to: 1) arrange your life so as to talk of spiritual things, 2) as you sit establish your home and its patterns, 3) when you walk-march through life, 4) when you lie down-in times of rest or sleep, 5) and when you rise up-to be made to rouse or stand up.

Twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week in all circumstances the responsibility of spiritual truth lies in the home with the parents and guardians of children.

The communication for teaching (6:20-23). When the matter of communication is discussed divergent opinions soon arise as to what is the best method by which to fulfill communication.

Verse seven suggests that communication takes place at many different times. Our text this week reminds us in several places to "tell the stories to our families."

It is imperative that we know and teach the stories to the next generation of believers so that the truth remains alive and working through the ministry of God's Spirit.

Verse nine reflects the lifestyle by which the home is to live. Such a lifestyle will insure that the communication of godly truth will continue.

Verse 23 summarizes the pilgrimage of the family unit in teaching truth. If we have been "brought out" in order to be "brought in," then it is necessary to share God's truth so that all may "inherit the land."

Marshall is pastor of Longview Heights Church in Olive Branch.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Purpose in life

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

By Dell Scoper

What is the guiding principle of your life? Have you clearly defined a life purpose to give you daily direction? If so, how would you explain your purpose in life to a new Christian? This lesson challenges us to make pleasing God our primary purpose in life.

In 1 Thess. 4:1-12, Paul instructed the Thessalonians to please God by avoiding sexual immorality, paying more attention to brotherly love, and winning the respect of unbelievers.

Live to please God (vv. 1-2). Paul's introductory word, "finally," indicated a transition of thought rather than the end of his letter. As was Paul's custom, the series of admonitions launched here was the final part of his epistle.

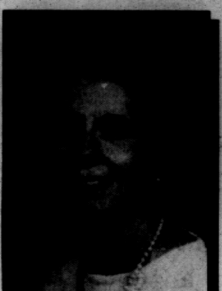
"Brothers" showed again his sensitivity approaching the following delicate subjects, obvi-

ously of grave importance to him.

Paul stimulated his converts' memories about what he had already verbally told them, how they must "live in order to please God." He affirmed that the Thessalonians were indeed following his teachings in many ways. Yet there was room for continual development and improvement, as he urged them to please God "more and more."

Paul's instruction is to be understood as providing a pattern for living. Because he believed this instruction was revealed to him "by the authority of the Lord Jesus," he logically assumed that they should obey such within the context of their conversion, when they were placed in "the Lord Jesus."

Live in purity (vv. 3-8). God's will means the desire and purpose of God. The call to be holy (set apart) is an absolute, woven



Scoper

throughout the fabric of God's Word.

A part of holiness is total abstinence from all types of sexual immorality, a radical thought for those to whom sexual promiscuity was perhaps the most commonly accepted practice of that day. While the Hebrews were a long time coming to monogamy, by the time of Jesus standards of sexual purity had been established which were totally foreign to the surrounding culture.

In the pagan world, chastity was an unknown virtue. During the Empire Period of Roman history marriage vows were disregarded and divorce, a matter of caprice. In Greece, immorality had always been blatant.

Hellenistic culture dictated that as long as a man supported his family, there was no shame in extramarital relationships. Would you not agree that today's new morality is simply the old morality brought forward into our secular culture?

Verse four remains a subject of debate. Should the word "vessel" (KJV) be understood as

"wife" (RSV) or as "body?" (NIV). If the former interpretation is accepted, then Paul urged men to learn how to live with their wives in holy matrimony.

If the latter interpretation is chosen, one reason being that Paul did not specifically single out the men in this verse, then the exhortation is for all Christians to exercise control over their bodies (2 Cor. 4:7). The Thessalonians now belonged to a community of faith with God-given values far different from those of their former life.

Live in love (vv. 9-10). This section begins with an affirmation and moves to an admonition, probably addressing a particular issue Paul felt needed attention. Paul's statement, "taught by God," did not refer to any particular verbal or written teaching. It rather described an inner disposition of the soul produced only by the Holy Spirit, who is the inner witness to the love experienced within the body of believers. Given the example of Christ, to abound more and more in this essential grace, was a high potential to reach during their spiritual journey of the Thessalonians.

Indeed, part of pleasing God is increasingly to love other Christians.

Live to win respect (vv. 11-12). A possible interpretation of this passage is that Paul was addressing tendencies that would grow markedly worse (2 Thess. 4:5). The preaching of the Second Coming had produced an awkward situation in Thessalonica.

Some members of the church had given up their jobs while waiting for the Parousia. Daily routines were disrupted, creating a situation so serious that possibly Paul's advice had been sought.

Consequently, Paul reminded these Christians not to be divisive, but to live peacefully within society. The apostle wanted his instructions to have a twofold result. In order that their conduct win the respect of outsiders, their restlessness, meddlesomeness, and idleness must be eliminated. By living lives characterized by calmness, love that is not perceived as idle curiosity, and hard work that leads to self-sufficiency, Christians today will please God by earning the respect of unbelievers.

Scoper is a member of First Church, Laurel.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats,



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Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lit.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Ronny E. Robinson, Executive Director

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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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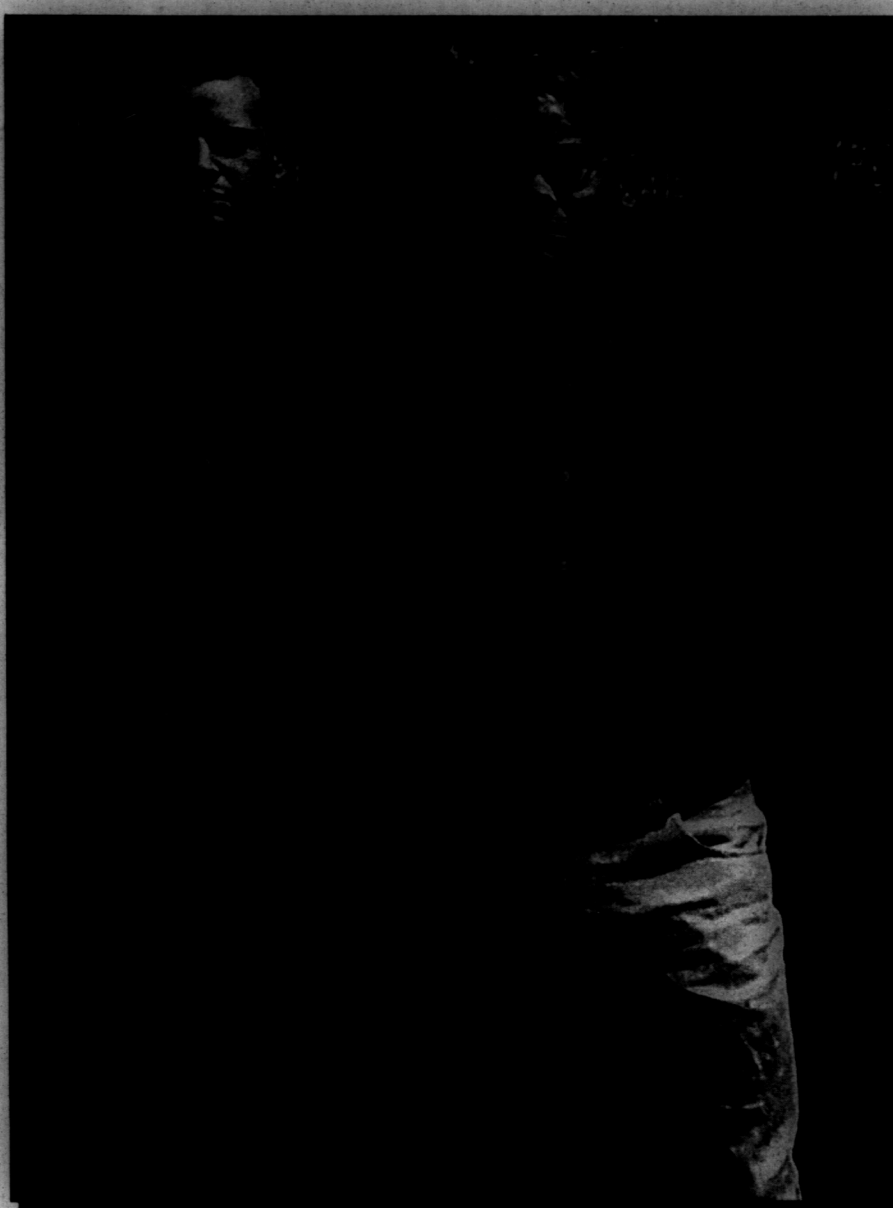
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Clue: F = D

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Proverbs Ten: Thirteen.

Arab-American: 'I assumed you hated me'

DALLAS (BP) — Ergun Caner spent the first half of his life devoted to Islam.

Raised as the son of Acar Mehmet Caner, he practiced the Kalima, Islam's creed; the Salat, praying to Mecca five times a day; the Zakat, contributing a specified portion of his income to the faith; the Sawm, fasting during Ramadan; and awaited the opportunity to participate in the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Seventeen years later, Muslims would call him a "kafir" of the worst type, he told an overflow crowd at First Church, Dallas, using the term for an infidel declared to be as good as dead.

Several hundred Kurdish Muslims were among those invited to hear Caner describe how his life changed in 1982 when he converted to Christianity.

Citing the Koran's words in Hadith in 9:57, Caner said, "Mohammed says anyone who changes his Islamic religion, 'Kill him,' but I also know, my Kurdish friends, that you have given me this hour the greatest gift that I have ever had in my ministry — your presence here."

Caner told the Christians in the audience, "For 17 years of my life, I assumed you hated me." Muslims living in America have similar expectations, he said, in light of the recent attacks justified by members of the Islamic Jihad.

"There are those that expect retribution. They expect revenge but, believers in Jesus Christ, do you know what they do not expect?" Caner asked.

"They do not expect you to love them in spite of themselves, and why would you do so? Because that's exactly how he [Jesus] loved you," he said.

Such an outward expression of love won Caner over when he accepted a friend's invitation to Steltzer Road Church in Columbus, Ohio.

"I didn't walk in there and see them spit upon me. They didn't smack me down or call me a 'sand nigger.' Instead they loved me, and when I asked them why they loved me, they said it was because Christ first loved us," he recounted.

Refusing to back away from a Gospel message in the presence of diverse religious groups in his Sept. 16 message, Caner said, "The one thing good Muslims and good Christians agree upon is that we are confounded by the media that keeps insisting that we all offer up prayers to the same God."

He added, "I did not switch religions nor did I trade teams. I was saved by the precious blood of Jesus Christ and thus I am born again."

"What has happened to me was done to me, not through anything I have done, and it is that Gospel, that hope in that name that I preach tonight."

Ergun Caner

describe another time when people asked, "Where is God in all of this?"

While stating that there is no sin in asking such a question, Caner said the answer can only come by asking the right person.

"Even in the midst of this cacophony of questions, the plethora of issues that he [Habakkuk] asks, with every worry and every pain, he says, 'The Lord is still in his temple. Let all the earth be silent before him,'" Caner pointed out.

Habakkuk's passionate prayer stands in contrast with the "pundits pontificating on television in dry tones as if this is some sort of political or cultural issue," Caner said of the passage.

"Habakkuk takes his question directly to a God who is listening. Don't think for a moment that we have all the answers. We don't," Caner insisted, "but I know the One who does and be he silent or revelatory, I'm just going to have to trust him on this, and so we believe in victory but we only trust in God."

Caner empathized with the rage that Americans feel over the acts of terrorism.

"We ask the question, 'How could a religion do this?' and yet, Christianity has in its history a time when warriors were promised that Jesus would forgive all their sins if they died on the battlefield during the Crusades."

"While we may have forgotten the Crusades, they have not," Caner said of the Muslims. "We must admit that we, on our side, have had the same testimony of our own type of Christian jihad."

Such accounts from the history of religion reveal the distinction between "man seeking God" through a religious activity and "God seeking man" as expressed in Christianity, Caner explained.

"Religion is trying to do things to earn God's favor, but Christianity says there is nothing you can do to make God love you any more," he said.

"Before you think that's only a Muslim thing, oh, no, no," he reminded the Christians in attendance.